



# Citizen Participation

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

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Citizen participation is the cornerstone of a successful, vibrant rural community. As citizens have an opportunity to participate in community decisions and goal-setting, a strong sense of cooperation and community pride is fostered. Participation from the citizens of Bennet and the surrounding area in the following workshops, surveys and meetings was very instrumental in laying out the goals and objectives that have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, and should be used to set policy and direction for the future of the Village of Bennet.

- **Goals for Community Revitalization**

- 1992 Workshop

- Overview and self-assessment

- Identifying community goals, long-term and short-term

- Program Leaders:

- Paul H. Gessaman, UNL Community Development Specialist

- Don Miller, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension,  
Lancaster County

- Dates: April 14, April 28, May 5, May 19, June 16, June 30

- **Bennet Community Survey - 1992**

- 450 surveys were distributed by mail in October

- 134 (30%) were returned

- Results were compiled by Lancaster County Extension office, and were presented publicly in early December

- **Land Use and Housing Survey**

- April 24, 1993

- 16 people participated in conducting a survey of the entire Village

- **Strengthening the Rural Community with Local Leadership**

- Program Leader:

- Dr. Ed Nelson, President Emeritus Chadron State College

- Dates: November 22, 1993, January 17, 1994

- **Bennet Community Survey - 1993**

- 230 surveys were distributed door to door in December

- 141 (61%) were returned

- Results were compiled by Lancaster County Extension office, and were presented at the January 17th, 1994 meeting with Dr. Nelson, President Emeritus Chadron State College

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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### Introduction

All worthwhile endeavors are intended to accomplish something. Certainly the Comprehensive Plan is the most definitive statement a community can make about the kinds of things it wants to accomplish in the coming years. A quality living environment, adequate housing, progressive schools and reliable utilities are just some of the elements that communities commit themselves to as part of creating a viable future.

Goals and objectives are a collection of values, an evaluation of available resources and the "measuring stick" that will be used to guide and assess our future progress. They were developed from a compilation of survey results and sentiments expressed at the various workshops and town meetings that have been held since April of 1992.

We begin with a Vision Statement that summarizes our principal direction of growth and change. Goals help define the different components of how that vision of the future will be oriented and the activities which we consider top priority in order to obtain a quality of life. Objectives provide us specific steps that we can budget for, allocate time to and communicate with. The following Goals and Objectives were adopted for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan by both the Bennet Planning Commission and the Village Board of Trustees in October, 1994.

### Vision Statement

Bennet is our home. Together we face the changes of the past few decades that have affected many rural communities. These changes can create new opportunities for better living when approached in a positive frame of mind. Growth and development is encouraged and fostered where a balance exists among private property rights, use of natural resources, public investment in community facilities and services, and protection of the natural environment for our continued sustenance.

### Land Use Goal and Objectives

#### Goal

- Foster orderly and efficient development pattern containing a system of land uses, including agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial and public uses, efficiently served by a transportation system and community facilities and services, which provides a broad economic base, safe healthy living conditions and is sensitive to social needs and environmental qualities

#### Objectives

- Develop a zoning ordinance which allows for orderly future growth and development

- Develop a land use plan with definitive growth and development areas, based on sound principles
- Locate future development in areas within and adjacent to Bennet corporate limits which can reasonably be served by water and sewer systems
- Encourage new residential development within existing residential areas where already served by existing infrastructure
- Locate new commercial development within existing central business district
- Encourage the development of an area for retail shops and services
- Retain rural lands in agricultural use until needed for community expansion
- Direct future urban growth to the north and east
- Preserve area west and south of Bennet in agricultural use
- Preserve as open space or develop into park, those areas of stream and drainage courses, tree stands and other natural features
- Locate commercial and industrial expansion so as not to create traffic conflicts in residential areas
- Encourage coordination between the State, community and landowners along Highway 43 in the development of highway and property access
- Seek sub-area plan amendment to Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan to reflect Bennet's future land use plan beyond its 1 mile jurisdiction.

## **Housing Goals and Objectives**

### **Goals**

- Ensure an adequate and reasonable supply of safe, affordable and aesthetically pleasing housing
- Ensure a choice of housing types and lot sizes for all segments of the population
- Encourage future residential development in areas contiguous to existing Bennet residential areas
- Provide for a common open space while maintaining overall density controls through zoning and subdivision regulations

### **Objectives**

- Adopt and enforce standards of housing conditions and use of vacant lots through Village health and safety ordinances
- Encourage and support a weatherization program
- Encourage the development of a housing authority or development corporation to stimulate the development of rental and owner housing for low and moderate